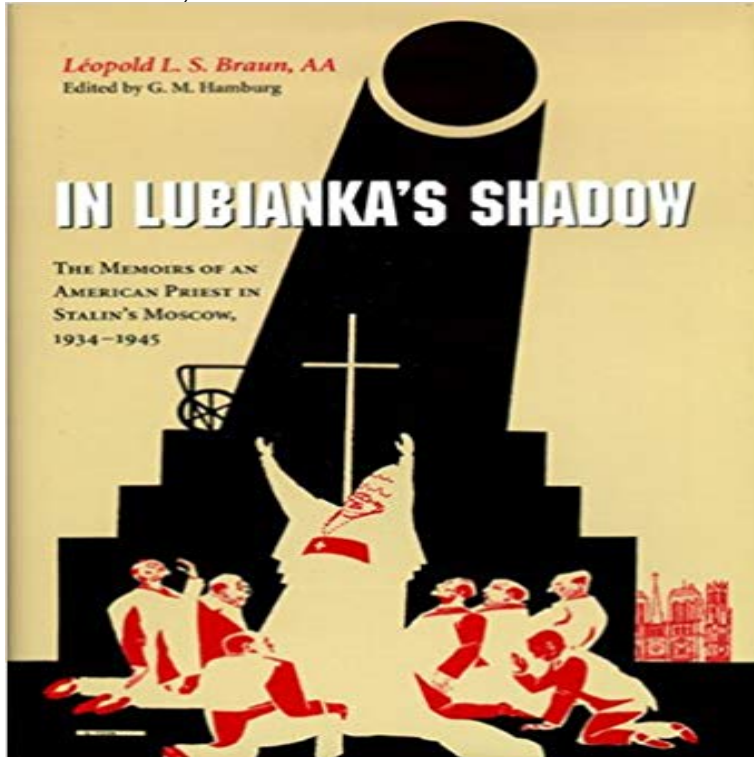


In Lubiankas Shadow: The Memoirs of an American Priest in Stalins Moscow, 1934-1945



In Lubiankas Shadow chronicles the extraordinary life of a young American Catholic priest, Father Leopold Braun, who, as pastor of a Catholic church near the Lubianka political prison in the heart of Moscow, witnessed Stalins purges, the Soviet governments campaign against organized religion, and the destruction of World War II. These memoirs, recently discovered in the archive of Father Brauns Assumptionist order by Soviet scholar G. M. Hamburg, offer an intimate account of Father Brauns valiant effort to uphold Christian worship in the only Catholic church allowed to operate in Stalins Moscow. Posted to Moscow in 1934 as chaplain of the United States embassy, Father Braun served the embassy staff and local parishioners in the Saint Louis des Francais Church at a moment when Stalins anti-religious campaign was reaching a crescendo. He describes the Soviet governments intimidation and arrest of his parishioners, police surveillance of the church building, and personal harassment designed to force him out of the country. Father Brauns responses to these pressuressometimes amusing, sometimes heart-rending, but always intelligent and soulfultell us much about the capacity of ordinary people to respond to extraordinary circumstances. Braun also gives us a touching perspective on the harsh daily lives of Moscows common people. He reports in detail on his visits to busy downtown stores, conversations in peasant markets on the citys outskirts, encounters with patients and medical staff in Moscow hospitals, and meetings with Soviet officials. Under his pen, Soviet society comes alive, with its citizens poverty, cynicism, humor, and courage on full display. Accompanying the memoirs is an introductory, historical essay by Hamburg, who reveals from Father Brauns correspondence additional details of Soviet religious and political life. In Lubiankas

Shadow is required reading for anyone interested in modern Russian history and for those concerned about the survival of religious faith under political assault. This is an astonishing memoir: astonishing for the story it tells of the ordeal of an American priest in sustaining the only Catholic church in Moscow during the terrible years of the Great Terror and World War II; astonishing for its account of Soviet reality in those years, perhaps unparalleled in range and depth among foreigners memoirs of this period; and astonishing for the authors unsuccessful attempts to get his Moscow memoir published during his lifetime, as recounted in Gary Hamburgs expert introduction. Terence Emmons, emeritus, Stanford University This memoir is one of the most remarkable historical documents to come to light in an era of major archival revelations in Soviet history. Because of the unique nature of the circumstances of Father Brauns tenure in Moscow, his memoir reveals a previously unilluminated side of Soviet existence. Father Brauns personal commitment and courage enabled him to achieve a familiarity with Soviet society and officialdom that leads to incidents, by turns, movingly affirmative of human capacity for nobility and selflessness, chillingly reminiscent of the worst sides of human nature, amusing in a Kafka-esque fashion, and breathtaking from an historians perspective for the internality and intimacy they reveal. Thomas Sanders, United States Naval Academy

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